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How the Children Keep New Year's Day in Japan.

(By Lizzie D. Armond, in 'Good Cheer.')

Before the New Year's festival comes there is a delightful rush and bustle, for though the Japanese are a very clean people the house must all be put in apple-pie order.

There is no Christmas in Japan, so this New Year's festival goes on for three days. The Mochi-man is the national Santa Claus; he always appears very mysteriously some time the day before the first of January. As there are no chimneys in Japanese houses, he is obliged to slip through the door, and right where the almond-shaped eyes of the little ones can watch him. He boils, mixes and makes the delightful mochi that is formed into sticky cakes, after being worked about with a bamboo rod in a wooden bowl until as glossy as strained honey.

Night comes at last, and the children gladly scramble off to bed, though many of them do not sleep a wink. At midnight some of the grown folks make it a point to throw a handful of beans and rice in the face of the sleeping children; then begins the frolic. The beans and rice fly about in lively fashion, because in this way the thrower is supposed to wish that through the coming year good health, luck and happiness may follow the receiver and that Satan may not trouble him.

On New Year's Day the tiny maidens have new dresses, just as fine and bright-colored as their parents can afford. The girls play battledore and shuttlecock through the streets, and so wild does the excitement rage that one has to dodge balls flying on every side, and be careful not to tumble headlong over the children, who are skipping about like so many grasshoppers.

The boys, dressed in their best, fly gaudily-decorated kites; the fathers and mothers get up on the house roofs and send their long big kites skimming through the air.

The young folks are taken around to different houses to make friendly visits. You might really call this the children's festival, for any games that suit their fancy are immediately arranged and played, the parents entering into the fun quite heartily.

It is really a wonder that the children are not sick after three days of continual stuffing, as the shops are filled with curious looking and tasting candies, and fathers and mothers are only too ready to buy these sweets.

The Fate of the Christmas Tree.

(By Mrs. Ida Woodbury Seymour.)

What becomes of all the Christmas trees? 'Why, they are put in the ash barrel, and carted away, of course,' is the answer that most people would give, and think it a foolish question to ask. This statement is true, in the main, and while it does describe the way in which a large proportion of the trees are gotten rid of, it by no means disposes of the whole of them, nor of the question: What is the fate of the gaily decked Christmas tree after the holiday season is over?

Before Christmas the evergreen tree, hemlock, balsam, fir, or spruce, was an object of universal interest. It was in evidence everywhere. It extended its green arms toward you as you walked along the street. Its spicy fragrance greeted you at the grocery, or the butcher's shop. Women with baskets and with babies, and women in rich furs or in cheap imitations, inspected the different varieties critically, and bargained with the shop-keeper for the particular tree which suited their fancy and purse.

Then what an air of mystery surrounded its entrance into the home. How it was smuggled into the house while the children were at school or under cover of darkness after they were in bed, and then secreted in the cellar or convenient closet until the time arrived for its adorning. How big it looked when set in place; even a little one gained in dignity and apparent size by being put upon a table or on a box upended

and draped around with cloth or crepe paper. Then the delightful task of decorating it! The gay glass balls and ornaments of various colors, stars, hearts and angels resplendant in gilt and silver! Wondrous fruits and flowers grew upon its branches, while the cornucopias weighed them down with their bulging loads of sweetness.

How mammas and aunties and elder sisters worked with feverish haste through the late hours of the night before Christmas,' and even papas and uncles mounted a step ladder to lend a hand; and when at last the task was completed, the tiny tapers all in place, the popcorn and cranberry chains looped gracefully around, the gifts tied on or set beneath, and the tinsel scattered in a glittering shower over the whole, the faithful workers viewed with satisfaction the beautiful tree, and, tired but happy, went to seek their well-earned rest.

But when it was lighted, and the eager children caught their first glimpse of its glittering glory and gazed awe-struck upon its many wonders, then King Christmas-tree reigned supreme. Young and old alike yielded him their homage, and shouts of joy announced his triumph. He was the centre of interest for the entire household, and none cared to dispute his sovereign sway. Even the holly and the mistletoe were forgotten, and the ground pine and laurel wreaths hung dejectedly from the picture frames, unnoticed and neglected, while their brilliant rival outshone them all.

All through the holiday week, the tree was yet the ruler, although shorn somewhat of its first transcendent glory, and its branches lightened of their load of presents. The neighbors' children came in to admire, and perhaps receive some small gift of candy or toy still hanging from the upper boughs. On New Year's Eve there was a revival of interest. The tree was again lighted up, and all once more sat around and admired, though in a milder degree, more out of compliment than from genuine enthusiasm. When the candles burned down to the last flicker, and papa blew them out one by one, then the Christmas tree's reign was over. It might be allowed to stand a day or two longer, but no one took much notice of it, and as the little needles began to drop from the branches, littering the floor, mamma thought it high time to get it out of the way and the muss cleaned up. So the king was deposed. His crown and sceptre were taken from him, and his glittering jewels put away carefully 'until next year,' when they will decorate his successor.

Alas, for earthly greatness! He has had his brief triumph and must now be cast aside as rubbish, must make way for life's bread and butter interests. And so we come back to the question, What becomes of the Christmas trees when they have served their purpose, and have been stripped of their glory?

Some answers to this query may be found by any one who walks with open eyes about the city during the first weeks of January. The aftermath of the Christmas season blossoms mournfully in the withered garlands and wreaths, the dry and broken holly and mistletoe that litter the areas and thrust their faded green from the dusty depths of the ash can, while their comrade of that joyous time, the Christmas tree, shivers in their melancholy company as they wait for the coming of the rubbish cart. Poor, forlorn tree! No longer is it an object of respect and admiration for the small boy, who now gratifies his native propensity to vandalism as he irreverently breaks off its branches to do rough duty as swords or guns, and ornaments his hat with the twigs that he has stripped from them.

Sometimes you will see a whole tree doing service as a sled, one or two small children sitting on the outspread branches, while a bigger boy, or it may be two, drag it along by the stem. In the vacant lots of the outlying districts, where the children can play without interference from a policeman, the discarded tree is made to serve for their amusement in a variety of ways.

A row of them set close together to form a stockade, guarded a miniature fort in a lot where sand dumped there for building purposes had been utilized for amateur military operations.

Some little girls playing house in a recess of the rocks near High Bridge, had two fir trees stuck in the ground, which they were 'supposin' ' was their front yard, as the space was enclosed by a row of sticks which did duty for a picket fence. The illusion of a cottage in the country was perfect to their minds, no doubt.

But no matter how they may amuse themselves with it at first, the tree at last goes to make a bonfire. Thus it ends in a blaze of glory which delights the small men and women almost as much as when they first gazed upon its taper-lighted beauty. The boys gather all the old trees in the neighborhood, to make as big a blaze as possible. It is great fun, too, to snatch out branches all afire at one end, and chase the girls with them, or whirl them around to make circles and fiery snakes. When the fire dies down, and the smouldering embers have been scattered or stamped out, the tree, which glowed in beauty even on its funeral pyre, has reached its end. Only a few charred fragments, and the memory of its glory remain.

Not always, though, do Christmas trees end in ignominious fashion; some are destined for nobler uses. Parents with a practicable mind, particularly in the tenement house districts, have grasped the fact that their dry resinous wood which makes such a beautiful bonfire, will burn equally well in the kitchen stove, and use it to start the fire for breakfast. So Jimmy or Patsy is set to work with a hatchet, and the wood box is soon filled with the finest kind of kindling wood.

One ingenious boy used his new jack-knife to advantage in making a useful article of furniture from his tree. After cutting away all the small branches he trimmed to a proper length those that remained and capped each one with a spool shaped down to form a knob. The trunk was set firmly into cross-pieces to form a base. The bark was left on, but the entire surface was rubbed smooth and varnished, and now the clever youngster has a novel and artistic hat tree upon which he hangs everything it will hold.

A lady, who had often during her summer vacation, hired a man to go into the woods and gather balsam for her to make a pillow, suddenly awakened to the fact that her Christmas tree was of the same balsam fir, and she promptly set to work cutting off the needles and tender twigs and filled a cushion with them.

Another lady successfully combined benevolence wih economy by sending to the mission school of her church the Christmas tree which had served her own family. Most of the Sunday-schools have their Christmas tree celebrations a day or two after Christmas, so that it is easy to utilize a tree again in this way, and it is often done.

The hemlock tree has delicate branches with a ridgy surface that is very pretty after the leaves drop off, and the stems turn brown. One mother who noticed this, pointed out to her children how they could put their kindergarten training to practical use, and set them to work making photograph frames and a variety of small articles out of the twigs of their hemlock Christmas tree. Fine wire was used for tying them together, and the finished article was varnished to bring out the color.

Thus, even after its glory is past, the Christmas tree can still be made to yield pleasure and serve for use or ornament; furnishing work for clever fingers, and ending in something that shall remind us throughout the year of the happy Christmas time.

'Good-Bye.'

Good-bye,' Old Year! must you really go?
It's like parting with a friend;
You've had so much that was good to show,
I wish that you never would end.

You've brought me pleasure, you dear Old Year,
With gifts from the Father above;
Brought so many blessings, so seldom a tear,
That I've learned your name to love.

You have brought me days when the earth was bright,
And others of cold and snow;
But whatever the weather my heart has been light—
There's so much to enjoy, you know.

'Good-bye,' Old Year! Are you very sad
To think that your life is done?
Mamma says—I am sure this will make you glad—
That I'm better than when you began.
—Maggie Jessup.

Stay yet, my friends, a moment stay—
Stay till the good old year,
So long companion of our way,
Shakes hands and leaves us here.
Oh, stay! Oh, stay!
One little hour, and then away.

The year whose hopes were high and strong,
Has now no hopes to wake;
Yet one hour more of mirth and song
For his familiar sake.
Oh, stay! Oh, stay!
One mirthful hour and then away.

The kindly year! his liberal hands,
Have lavished all his store,
And shall we turn from where he stands
Because he gives no more?
Oh, stay! Oh, stay!
One grateful hour and then away.

Days brightly came and calmly went,
While yet he was our guest;
How cheerfully the week was spent!
How sweet the seventh day's rest!
Oh, stay! Oh, stay!
One golden hour and then away.

Dear friends were with us, some who sleep
Beneath the coffin-lid;
What pleasant memories we keep
Of all they said and did!
Oh, stay! Oh, stay!
One tender hour and then away.

Even while we sing, he smiles his last,
And leaves our sphere behind.
The good old year is with the past;
Oh, be the new as kind!
Oh, stay! Oh, stay!
One parting strain, and then away.
—William Cullen Bryant, in 'Christian Herald.'

BOYS AND GIRLS

Watching the Old Year Die.

Many choose to pass the closing hours of the dying year in prayer and contemplation—a fitting way for the Christian, to whom the changes of time and season are constant reminders of God's goodness. Our artist has selected a pleasant subject for his illustration; a family group who, having decided to 'see the old year out,' are now watching with breathless interest the ticking away of the last moments of its existence.

Slowly, yet inevitably, the old clock

> Points and beckons with its hands
> From its case of massive oak,

as it records the last echoes of the expiring year. The old clock does its duty well:

Through days of sorrow, and of mirth
Through days of death and days of birth,
Through every swift vicissitude
Of changeful time, unchanged it stood.

Now the whole household hangs upon the first stroke of midnight, which ushers in the new-born year, and the old year forever becomes a memory. What joys and sorrows go with it! What hopes and fears come to us with its successor! It is a moment in which the grateful heart rises to the Father above and thrills with thankfulness for past mercies. What will the year bring? Who knows what its weeks may have in store for him, of joy or sorrow, of happiness or misery? Happy is he who can greet the new year in calm confidence founded on faith in his loving Father. Strong in that confidence, he can look forward without apprehension, knowing that nothing can come to him but by the will of his Almighty Friend, and that be it pleasant or painful, all things will work together for good to them that love God.

The opening year Thy mercy shows;
That mercy crowns it till its close.
By day, by night, at home, abroad,
Still we are guided by our God.
Oh, God! Our Helper, ever near,
Crown with thy smile this glad New Year.

—'Christian Herald.'

A Thought For the New Year

I wish this could reach the eyes of all the ladies in our city, for I know it then would touch their hearts, not from any merit of its own, but simply from the fact that it will cause them to think. What I am about to speak of is a custom of New Year's Day, that great day in society and in our lives. It is the time of all others when most people, realizing that another year has gone with its burden of good, and, in many cases, its so much heavier burden of evil deeds, think of the past and its failures, and resolve for the coming year to make the world better, not worse, for their having lived in it.

Now, I speak to the ladies. Will you, knowing what you do, deliberately plant the seed of evil and sorrow in many homes on this day? I can see you start in indignation at the accusation or question; yet that is what you are doing. How many of you, mothers and sisters, loving your husbands, sons and brothers dearly, will for the sake of them and their friends risk public opinion and banish the decanter

from the table in your reception room? If you, leaders in society, would start this good work, a great, great number, who have had the will but not the courage, will follow so speedily that this desired reform may soon become the fashion, that despot at present ruling so many homes. Probably oftener than you suspect your hand has offered a young man his first glass, the temptation has come through you, and only the future will show what evil has been done. You may never hear or know of the bitter reproaches with which many speak and think of you as having helped to ruin a character, cause a drunkard's life, fill a drunkard's grave.

I have heard young men say:—'What could we do; we could not refuse wine when offered us by a lady.' Young men of a certain age cannot face the ridicule that their acquaintances know so well how to bestow; to escape it, they will take this first step toward destruction, even knowing that, once having given way, they will not have the power to resist in the future.

Now, my friends, I appeal to you; Cannot we, mothers, wives, sisters, help our sons, husbands and brothers, if instead of weakly, for the sake of doing as others do, we refuse to put temptation in their way. Nay, refuse to invite them to do evil under the false name of hospitality. Surely, true hospitality can be shown in ways that are not harmful.

You will find that all true men will admire and respect you more for your courage and your thought for them; as for those who go from house to house for the attractions of the punch-bowl, and that alone, do you wish them as friends? Gentlemen will not disdain a cup of good coffee, bouillon or chocolate in place of wine.—M. B., in 'Christian Intelligencer.'

The New Year.

(By Iola.)

Fairy stranger, who art thou,
With the gems upon thy brow?
Coming in the stilly night,
Clad in robes of spotless white,
Noiselessly thy footsteps fall,
In the cottage and the hall.

Soft and low the answer came:—
'Surely, thou must know my name;
For, while speeding swift away,
Ere the dawning of the day,
All the voices of the night
Cheered me as I came in sight.

'Heard you not the minster bell
As it tolled the Old Year's knell?
Heard you not the glad refrain,
As all nature pealed the strain,
"Welcome to the bright New Year,
Welcome, welcome, cheer on cheer?"'

Stranger, thou who art so fair,
With the dew-drops in thy hair,
With thy fresh and blooming face,
And thy youthful, artless grace,
Yet I cannot give thee cheer,
For I love thee, dear Old Year.

Many a gift, all richly wrought,
Brought me to my humble cot;
Many a peaceful, happy day
Had I, while beneath his sway.
Fairy princess, can you tell
If with thine 'twill be as well?

'Nay, my book is closely sealed,
None may know what's there revealed;
Be it joy or be it ill,
It will be whate'er He will;
For I'm coming in His name,
Who the sway of earth may claim.

'Trust Him, and, whate'er betide,
He'll be ever by thy side.
Should the darkness thee enshroud,
There'll be light behind the cloud.
Trust Him, and, 'mid sun or shade,
Thou need'st never be afraid.'

—'Standard.'

Getting Ready for Evelyn.

(By Isabel Gay.)

'Well, mother, did you have a good visit?'

'Yes; I had a real good visit. But don't ask me any more questions to-night, Bessie, I'm just tired out, and if everything's all right I'll just go to bed. I'll be fresher to talk in the morning.'

'Your bed is aired, and I guess your room is as clean as if you had swept and dusted it yourself.'

'I s'pose it is. Anyway, I won't hunt round for dirt to-night. My, but ridin' in the cars does use me up. Good-night, children.'

When Mrs. Hulings had gone to her room her daughter looked at her husband in relief.

'It's put off until to-morrow at any rate. Oh, Will, you don't know how I dread telling her. I almost wish I had done differently.'

'It's too late for that,' said Will Mitchell, philosophically. 'Besides, you did right about it. You must tell her, too, that we are going away. Will it be much of a shock, do you think?'

'I don't think she'll feel very bad; she finds the baby so troublesome.'

'He is a young reprobate, and no mistake. Don't tell your mother that he broke the big mirror in the parlor.'

'Tell her! I wouldn't tell her for a thousand dollars. She will never notice that the glass is new. I really think, Will, all things considered, that mother has been very patient with the baby. Don't you?'

'Uncommonly, for one of her disposition.'

'That is what I mean. What would you do if, when we go into our new house, I should develop into a housekeeper like mother.'

'I should consider it sufficient grounds for a divorce. Your mother is an unscrupulously neat woman.'

'I've sometimes thought so myself. But you needn't be afraid on my account. Mother says it's one of the trials of her life that I'm so easy-going.'

The next morning Mrs. Hulings, much refreshed by a night's rest, lingered at the breakfast table, talking to her daughter. The troublesome baby was still asleep. She had related the most important incidents of her just completed visit to her niece in Boston, and her daughter concluded that she had spent an enjoyable month.

'Really, mother, I'm awfully glad you had such a nice time.'

'Now, I haven't said I had such an extra nice time, Bessie. The children are terrible bad; as unruly and impudent as can be.'

'Why, mother! I knew you thought they were naughty when you were there ten years ago, but I supposed they had outgrown it.'

'They haven't. Even little Charlie, who was such a sweet, nice baby when I was there before, is as bad as any of them. I declare, when I looked at him and then thought of what a good, dear little thing he used to be, I couldn't help feeling sorry I hadn't tomahawked him in his cradle.'

Bessie laughed. 'Oh, mother! he'll probably grow up all right.'

'Just as the twig's bent the tree's inclined. So it's been quiet round here all the time I've been away. Nothin' at all happened?'

'I can't say that exactly. I guess Will and I must leave you. Will's uncle wants him to go into the bank with him at Bradford. It's quite an opening, you see.'

'It is that,' assented Mrs. Hulings. 'I'm pleased enough that Will is doing so well. I'll miss you terribly, though.'

'Even Willie?'

'I should think so. He's a dear little fellow if he is mischievous. I'm glad you ain't goin' but ten miles away. You can often come home, and it won't be too far for me to go and spend a day with you occasionally. But how is Emmeline Goodsell, Bessie? I wrote to her, and she never answered my letter. I've felt some put out about it.'

Bessie turned pale. 'Oh, mother, it makes me nearly sick to tell you that Mrs. Goodsell is dead. She died of pneumonia the week after you went away.'

Mrs. Hulings turned pale, too. She could not speak for a few moments, but she looked at her daughter with deepest reproach. Then she said:—'Dead! Emmeline Goodsell dead! Bessie! Bessie! why didn't you send for me?'

'Mother, if there had been anything under the sun that you could have done for Mrs. Goodsell I would have telegraphed you to come home. But she was dead before I even knew she had been sick. Willie was ailing and I hadn't been out of the house for several days. Will was in Bradford and knew nothing about it. I nearly fainted when Susy Atkins came to the door the day before Thanksgiving and told me about it. As soon as I could I put my things on and went over to Goodsell's.'

'Did they give her a nice funeral?' sobbed Mrs. Hulings.

Bessie hesitated a moment before she said, 'It was only fair. Things could have been a great deal better. I don't know why they weren't, for John really seemed heartbroken about his mother.'

'Oh, them Wheelers!' groaned Mrs. Hulings. (John Goodsell had married a Wheeler.) 'What did they lay her out in?'

'Her black silk. It looked so plain that I suggested that we put some illusion round the neck and in the sleeves, but Pauline wouldn't hear of it. She said they couldn't afford to spend another cent. They'd have everything to stand as it was. Mother Goodsell hadn't left enough to pay the doctor. So I went to the store and bought the illusion myself. She looked lovely when I had it arranged.' Bessie choked and stopped for a moment. Then she went on:—'The day of the funeral I cut all of our chrysanthemums and took them over, and Will had a beautiful crown made of white flowers besides. I really did all I could, mother.'

'Yes, I guess you did. I won't forget it, either. Where's Evelyn staying?'

'She's gone to live with John and Pauline.'

'For goodness sake! With John and Pauline!'

'Why, of course. Where would she go if not to them?'

'You know what Pauline Wheeler is. You know what a disposition and tongue she's got. And you know the way Emmeline raised Evelyn; she never spoke a cross word to her.'

'She not only never spoke a cross word, but she never spoke a word of any kind to her that wasn't loving and tender.'

'I know,' said Mrs. Hulings, hastily. 'Haven't I always said she was the kindest, patientest soul that ever lived? It was a blessed thing she didn't know Evelyn would have to live with John's wife.

She wouldn't have died happy if she had known it.'

'No,' sighed Bessie. 'It must be a terrible change for Evelyn. There's nobody living that I am as sorry for as I am for her.'

A futile rattling at a door-knob interrupted Mrs. Mitchell. She sprang up and opened the door into the sitting-room, thereby disclosing a lovely boy. 'You darling!' she said, snatching him up.

In spite of the bad character imputed to him by his father, Willie looked the picture of infantile innocence and loveliness as he sat smiling in his mother's arms. His recollection of his grandmother had almost faded from his two-year-old mind during the month that she had been away, but he seemed amiably inclined to begin a fresh acquaintance.

'He's grandma's pretty boy, that's what he is,' said Mrs. Hulings, fondly. 'Give him to me, Bessie, while you get his breakfast. Don't dress him, he looks so cunning in his nightie.'

. . . . . .

That afternoon Mrs. Hulings went to the cemetery. When she returned she showed extreme depression, and her face looked sodden with tears. She was very silent; her daughter and son-in-law strove in vain to draw her into cheerful conversation. Even Willie, parading all his baby graces, could not bring more than a gleam to her sad eyes.

At last, when Willie had been persuaded by his father to go to bed, Mrs. Hulings, alone with her daughter in the big fire-lit sitting-room, spoke.

'Really, Bessie, I don't see how I am going to stand it. It's most too much for me.'

Bessie looked startled. Her mother had always stood like a rock against whatever storms assailed her. Her courage was celebrated, together with her fine housekeeping, her generosity, and, alas! her quick temper, for miles around. That she should bend, and, perhaps, break, under the blow of the death of an old friend, was something her daughter was not prepared for.

'You'll get over it, mother, in time,' she said, soothingly.

'I'll never get over it. When you get to be fifty-five, Bessie, you'll know what it is to hold on like death itself to the friends you've known since you've known anybody. They'll be awful near and dear to you, but there'll be few, very few of them. Emmeline Goodsell was the last one that was left to me of all the girls I was brought up with. Them that ain't dead moved away years an' years ago, and some of them's gone by this time, I suppose. There never was one of them, though, that I thought a hundredth part as much of as I did of her. You'll hardly believe it, Bessie, but there never was a cross word between us in our lives. I suppose you'll think the credit of that belonged to Emmeline, and, maybe, most of it did, but not all. I never could get angry with her. She was like a good spirit near one, always so kind and gentle through thick and thin. She certainly was the cheerfulest, unselfishest being that ever lived. And the trouble she had! It would have killed or broke the spirit of most women years ago, but not her. She took poverty and disappointment and sickness and death as something the Lord had sent, and so not to be complained of.'

'Did you ever offer to help her, mother?'

'Not with money, for with all her easy ways she was dreadful proud. I wanted to, time and again, when I knew her taxes was due, or her house or barn needed painting, but I just didn't dare. I often thought she felt hurt about my givin' her that black silk dress—the one she was buried in—two years ago Christmas. But how glad I am I did it! What was that you said this morning about John's having to pay everything? He'll get his money back. There's that big house and farm.'

'They're mortgaged to their full value, Pauline says, and the interest hasn't been paid for more than a year. The place will have to be sold, for John can't possibly assume the debt.'

'That's like the Wheelers, always meaner than pusley,' lamented Mrs. Hulings. 'There's nothing to prevent John from taking hold of that place and making a good living off it; only his wife, she always hated the farm because her poor mother-in-law liked it. Contrariest piece that ever was, anyway.

'Don't blame her too much, mother. John doesn't want to farm. He likes clerking in the express office a great deal better.'

'I s'pose he does. John always was lazy. I don't know who he got it from, either. So the Goodsell place that's been in the family for more than a hundred years will be sold to satisfy a mortgage! My! my! what changes one sees in a lifetime. They used to be considered rich.'

'They're poor enough now. Evelyn hasn't a new thread of black. She had on a dress at church last Sunday that I know was made out of her mother's old serge, and a rusty old hat that she got, dear knows where.'

'How did the poor child look?'

'Well, mother, if you must know, she looked sad enough to break your heart, but pretty; oh, how pretty she is!'

'She features her mother, and is considerable like her in disposition, too. How did John seem?'

'About as usual. Men don't take things very hard, you know.'

'Some of 'em don't. Does Pauline wear mourning?'

'Oh, dear, yes!' handsome mourning, too.'

'Of course; she's the one that can afford it,' said Mrs. Hulings, with dry irony. 'There's some women that a death in the family gives real satisfaction to; it gives them a chance to change their style of clothes. Pauline's that kind.'

'You don't seem able to see any good in Pauline.'

'I do not. She's a Wheeler, and that means that she's hard-fisted, stingy, grasping and deceitful as all possessed. Talk about bein' poor. Her Uncle Nathan left her three thousand dollars five years ago, and I know not a cent of it has ever been touched. Yet she wouldn't allow her husband a dollar to make things a little easy for his folks. That's Pauline for you.'

Bessie looked thoughtfully at the fire. She was thinking that John Goodsell seemed very fond of his wife. Her lightest wish was law to him. It was common talk that he had not been as kind to his mother and sister as he might have been, and his neglect of them was generally charged to his wife's influence. Bessie was wondering if, should such an evil wish take possession of her, she could alienate Will Mitchell from his relatives. She hoped not.

Mrs. Hulings was gazing at the fire, too. Her usually fresh and handsome countenance was much ravaged by a day of weeping. The future was looking unexpectedly dark to her. Death had interfered with her dearest and longest cherished plan. She had arranged, unknown to anyone, that when their children were married and settled she and the much-loved Emmeline would spend their evening of life together in Mrs. Hulings's big, pleasant home. Together they would enjoy the mild pleasures of age, and together face the last enveloping inevitable shadow. It was not to be.

'I guess I'll go to bed; I'm tired out,' she said, rising that she might escape to her own room and there let the oncoming storm sway her as it would. 'Good-night, Bessie.'

She went slowly up the stairs, locked her door and sank into her cushioned rocking-chair. She pressed her hands upon her smarting eyes and rocked softly to and fro.

'Do you see me now, Emmeline, up there where you are?' she murmured. 'Do you forgive me for being vexed with you because you didn't answer my letter and making up my mind to take you to do about it? And are you worrying over poor little Evelyn? I know you are. With your lovin' heart you couldn't help it if you was in the very highest place in heaven. O Emmeline! how I wish I had tried harder to be like you an' not so independent an' quick-spoken, an' sharp, an' hard to suit about things that ain't of no real consequence. They seem awful poor an' mean an' small to me now. If I only could talk with you for half an hour my heart wouldn't be so sore. But you're gone, and my only child is going to leave me, and the little grandchild that I've loved a great deal more than most folks think, and I just don't know where to turn. I know you want me to bring Evelyn here, and I want to do it, but I'm afraid. If she only was here and happy I wouldn't be so heart-sick and dreadin' old age as I am tonight. And I've got enough for three families to live on.'

Mrs. Hulings's grief for her friend was no transient emotion. It was close beside her all the day, it lay down with her and rose up with her. Its softening influence was the means of rendering life easier for those who lived with her, both equals and dependents.

For instance, when Amos brought a full pail of milk from the barn one morning—it was the day before Christmas—he set it hurriedly on the table, and turned to the stove to warm his stiff hands. Unfortunately, the pail had been set too near the edge to balance, and a clatter on the floor was the announcement that it had fallen and the milk was soaking into the kitchen carpet.

Poor Amos seemed to grow smaller as he looked at it. He huddled himself together and waited for the familiar storm. But all he heard was a grave, 'Why, Amos, you ought to be more careful.'

Hannah, the maid-of-all-work, went into the pantry and shut the door that she might give vent to her surprise in solitude.

'Of all things! Whatever's comin' over her! I've seen her when her tongue would go like a fannin'-mill for a great deal less than that. I wonder if she's sick an' won't tell us.'

There was a much worse calamity later in the day. The huge plum pudding, in the making of which everybody in the house had taken a hand, had been poured into a floured cloth and Hannah was about to put it on to boil for the customary eight hours, when Bessie and her mother left the kitchen for a few minutes' rest. Suddenly an odor of burning pervaded the atmosphere. Its unpleasant aroma grew stronger every moment.

'Mother, something's burning!' exclaimed Bessie.

'It's the pudding,' said Mrs. Hulings, without excitement. She rose, however, and went to the kitchen.

Hannah stood beside the sink wherein she had set the kettle containing the intended Christmas cheer, the picture of guilty fear.

'What's the matter, Hannah?' asked her mistress.

'The matter is that I forgot to put a plate in the kettle, an' when I put the puddin' in it dropped like a lump of lead to the bottom an' burned fast to it as soon as it begun to boil. I don't see how I come to forgit the plate.'

'I don't either,' said Mrs. Hulings, in calm surprise.

'Let us try to get the pudding out,' suggested the practical Bessie. 'Bring the cake-bowl, Hannah, and a couple of wooden spoons. Maybe we can save the most of it.'

They made the effort, but when, after much careful prying of the bag from the bottom of the kettle they had succeeded in hoisting it almost to the top, the blackened cloth gave way under the weight, and the would-be rescuers saw with dismay the pudding rapidly emptying itself into the hot water.

'If that don't beat all! exclaimed the mortified Hannah. 'It's only fit for the pigs now. I s'pose we'll have to go to work an' make another one.'

Mrs. Hulings looked at the clock. 'We haven't time.'

'Well, if it ain't too bad,' went on Hannah. 'Christmas in this house without a plum puddin' will be something like Thanksgivin' without a turkey. It's all my fault, too. To my dyin' day, I shan't never understand why I forgot to put the plate in.'

'Accidents will happen, Hannah,' said Mrs. Hulings, excusingly.

Bessie's eyes opened wide at this. 'So they will; but I never knew mother to admit it before,' she said to herself.

Mrs. Hulings did not return to the sitting-room. She said she would lie down in her own room for a while.

She was strangely exultant as she lay on her bed. 'I do believe I'll be fit yet,' she said, with happy, tearful eyes fixed on the ceiling.

. . . . . .

Christmas passed with no mishap worthy of record, save the deliberate emptying by Willie of a saucer of cranberries on the best tablecloth. For this naughtiness his grandmother refused to chide him.

'Don't say another word to him, Bessie; he's only a baby, and I wouldn't have his dinner spoiled for six tablecloths.'

The day after Christmas was moving day for the Mitchells. It was raw and cold, and from time to time a drizzling rain fell. There was enough mud 'tracked' into the house to try the patience of the meekest of women, but not a fulmination was forthcoming from Mrs. Hulings. It is true that she had had to flee to her room several times to wrestle with the anguish of spirit engendered by the sight of wet foot-prints on her handsome hall carpet, but she bravely crushed it down, and went forth to the scene of action again.

There was not a great deal to move, inasmuch as most of the furniture belonged to Mrs. Hulings. At twelve o'clock the house was in its usual exquisite order again.

When dinner was over and her husband had left the table, Bessie looked at her mother.

'Mother, don't get vexed with me for asking, but why don't you go to see Evelyn? I can't understand it. Don't you ever mean to go?'

'I mean to go just as soon as ever I can, Bessie,' said Mrs. Hulings, with quivering lips. 'I'm not ready yet.'

'Poor Evelyn!' said Bessie. 'Yesterday must have been a sad day for her.'

Mrs. Hulings said nothing.

. . . . . .

The day before New Year's was clear and cold. There was enough snow on the ground to make sleighing a pleasure. Mrs. Hulings sat beside one of her large front windows with her knitting in her hands, taking account of all that went on within the limits of her vision. Suddenly she leaned forward with extreme interest.

'That's Wheeler's team; I'd know them sorrels anywhere. John Goodsell's drivin', and Pauline's with him. I guess I'll go out and hail them.'

She cast a little shawl over her head, and hurried carefully to the gate. The young Goodsells, seeing that her intention was to stop them, drew up with inward reluctance.

'How d'ye do?' called Pauline, pleasantly. 'Nice day, isn't it?'

'Yes. Takin' a sleigh ride?'

'Not exactly. Father sent the cutter down, and we are going to spend New Year's with my folks. We felt that we couldn't have any company or go anywhere Christmas; but New Year's is different, *don't you think?*'

Mrs. Hulings did not reply. She looked straight past the blooming young face framed in heavy crepe, at John Goodsell, who was looking and feeling uncomfortable.

'Where's Evelyn?' she demanded.

'Oh, Evelyn's at home. We couldn't persuade her to come with us,' answered Mrs. John, easily.

'Is she going to stay there all alone till you get back?' asked Mrs. Hulings, still of John.

He had no time to reply. Pauline hastened to say, smilingly, 'I don't suppose she will. Still, I don't know; Evelyn's *not one of the cowardly kind.* She didn't say what she would do, but I dare say she will get one of the Simpson girls to stay nights with her. She was as spunky as could be when we left—wouldn't even say good-by to us.'

'I know the kind of spunk Evelyn's got,' said Mrs. Hulings, dryly, with her eyes fixed on John. 'I guess I'll go over an' get her to come an' stay with me.'

'Why, we left her at home to look after things,' exclaimed Pauline; 'that is, when she wouldn't come with us.'

'You'd ought to left somebody to look after her,' said Mrs. Hulings. She turned abruptly, without another word, and went back to the house.

John and Pauline exchanged blank glances. 'Maybe, we'd better not go,' suggested the—in this case—weaker vessel.

'Indeed we will go,' snapped his wife. 'There's nothing in the house to spoil. I suppose Evelyn will have sense enough to lock the doors, though I won't say for sure that she will.'

Mrs. Hulings did not take up her knitting again when she regained her fireside. 'I guess I'm ready to go,' she said: 'I think I must be when I can see a piece of meanness like that, and not boil clear over.'

She dressed herself, and after telling Hannah to make a fire in the spare chamber, she started out.

The winter dusk was falling when she stopped at John Goodsell's house. It was unlighted, save for the fire in the front room grate. Before the fire a slim young girl, in a black dress, sat weeping; weeping because of her friendliness, her loneliness and her terrible sense of bereavement. She started up as she heard the low knock on the door, and hastily dried her eyes. Before she could reach the door it was opened from the outside, and Mrs. Hulings came into the room.

Evelyn stood still for a moment, and then sprang toward her.

'O, Aunt Lucy, I thought you would never come!' she exclaimed, with a wild burst of tears.

Tears streamed down Mrs. Hulings's face as she took the young girl in her arms. 'I came just as soon as I could, Evelyn.'

'I've watched and watched for you day after day ever since I heard you were home. There's something I want to tell you. Nobody knows it but myself.'

'What is it, dear?'

'It is this'; but the mere thought of what she was to tell caused Evelyn to sob uncontrollably. Mrs. Hulings sat down and drew her down on her lap and comforted her into quiet.

At last Evelyn could go on: 'I suppose Bessie told you how sick mother was from the first. She was unconscious all the time, except a few minutes about two hours before she died. I was alone with her—the others had gone to supper—when she opened her eyes and called me by name.'

'Tell me just what she said, dear,' said Mrs. Hulings, eagerly.

'She said: 'Evelyn, I am going to leave you. But you won't be alone. If ever you need help of any kind to go to your Aunt Lucy. Tell her the last thing I asked on earth was that she would be your friend as she has been mine, and tell her all I had to leave her was my dear love.' That was all. She shut her eyes and never opened them again.'

The solemn young voice ceased, and the only sound heard in the room was Mrs. Huling's weeping. But although she wept, her heart was eased unspeakably.

The fire burned low, and Evelyn rose to replenish it. Mrs. Hulings checked her.

'You won't need any more fire here, Evelyn. You are going home with me. I'm going to keep you and do for you just as if you was my own child.'

. . . . . .

That night, when the church bells in the village were ringing in the New Year, Mrs. Hulings lay sleepless on her bed, deeply, prayerfully thankful. The dying message of her friend had struck a chord in her that would never cease to vibrate. She would do her utmost to be worthy of Emmeline's trust. 'In every way I'll be a better woman for it,' she murmured. 'Emmeline didn't live nor die in vain.'

Grandfather's New Year Story.

'A very happy New Year to the dear grandfather and grandmother!' cried the Van Gend children, as they flocked into the beautiful breakfast room on this crisp, fresh morning of the first of the year in the quaint old city of Amsterdam.

'But you shall not carry all the good wishes in your bundles,' laughed grandfather, 'for the good wife and I have many for our Hans and Hilda. Are you not glad that you are Hollanders, that you live in a country with such a noble past? It may well stir your young blood to think what a nation you were born into, a sturdy little country that has reached out into the ocean, and, driving its waters back, built for itself a great domain. No wonder we Hollanders are a strong, self-reliant race, when our forefathers came through so much to win first a country and then a government.'

'Ah, that was when our great Prince of Orange lived,' said sweet-voiced Hilda. 'It was no wonder people could be brave when they had such a leader. If I had lived in those times I am sure I should have been brave too.'

'I do not doubt my gentle little girl's bravery,' said grandfather Van Gend, 'nor that our Hans would have been as fearless as Gisbert Cornelisen, of the olden time.'

'Who was he?' exclaimed Hans and Hilda, in a breath, 'and what did he do?'

'Ah, you do not know about the siege of Leyden, do you, children? It was a terrible time for the Dutch. It shall be our New Year's story, though it happened away back in the summer and fall of 1574.

'The city was surrounded by the Spanish army, and Spaniards had possession of the coast for a great distance, so that our people could not get to the relief of the starving citizens of Leyden by land or sea.

'William of Orange did all that he could to push an army forward, and kept up the fainting courage of the citizens by noble letters sent by carrier pigeons. But the months went by and the provisions gave out in the city, and the people starved to death by hundreds. Yet the brave burgomaster, Adrian Van der Werf, would not surrender, for death at the hands of the Spanish was worse than death by starvation, he said.

'At last William decided to pierce the dikes that had cost so much to build, and let ships sail over the land to Leyden. One dike after another was opened, and as the waters from the North Sea flowed in the boats sailed on, fighting as they went, till they were very near the city. But now the water was not deep enough to float the boats. It was a terrible stoppage, but the God of storms sent a strong north-west wind, and the waters came dashing furiously in across the ruined dikes and lifted the boats and carried them on.

But there were two forts yet to be captured on the way—Zolterwoude, 500 yards from the city, and Lammen, only 250 yards away. The first fort was taken, and then night came down. What a strange, pitch-dark night it was! The people of Leyden feared that their rescuers might fail just at the last; the rescuing army feared the Spanish forces at the fort; but God had

GRANDFATHER'S NEW YEAR'S STORY.

sent even a greater fear into the hearts of the Spanish soldiers, as you shall see.

'All night long there were strange flickerings of torches at the fort. When morning dawned the boy I tell you about, Gisbert Cornelisen, begged permission to go from Leyden to the fort, and sure enough, just as he had thought, the Spaniards had fled. No wonder that he climbed the battlements and waved his cap frantically as a signal of joy to the city and the advancing soldiers!'

'How glad they must have been to see his signal!'

'Glad, indeed! It was a veritable Thanksgiving Day in Leyden. Those starving people did not wait to take food when it reached them, but pressed into the great church to send up prayers of gratitude and to sing hymns that were stopped by their very sobs. That is the story of the siege. Let us be thankful we live in no such troublous times, dear little people.

"How sleep the brave who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blest!
There Honor comes, a pilgrim gray,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And Freedom shall awhile repair
To dwell a weeping hermit, there."'

Making Up.

There had been some differences and a little unpleasantness in the family. 'John's wife' and Maria, the married daughter, had incurred in some way the displeasure of the unmarried members of the household. New Year is a time for 'making up,' so Sue and Helen, George and Dick, decided among themselves that the heartiest welcome should be for the delinquents. And so when 'John's wife,' in her widow's weeds, and Maria and her husband gathered with the rest at the family New Year's dinner, everybody except those who had arranged the matter was astonished to see how very happily and pleasantly the affair went off. As they were saying good night, they whispered to each other, with dewy eyes. 'We are glad to have their loving thoughts.' 'Let us tell them so,' said one. So they went around from room to room, seeking that which they valued more than gifts bought with silver and gold. Let us consecrate this New Year with loving thoughts for each other and let the feuds and quarrels and envyings die with the old year.—'Christian Herald.'

Dr. Lynn's First Case.

(By Faye Huntington, in 'Youth's Temperance Banner.')

Bess and Lynn were going home from school. You would have known that they were brother and sister, so strong was the resemblance between them. It was the day before New Year's. What, school during the holidays? Yes, and all because Phil Dolan would stray off across the river, where he caught the measles, and brought them over to East Side, so that the Board had to close school for a fortnight. This was away back in October, and now, to make up for lost time, the session was continued through the holidays, excepting, of course, Christmas and New Year's Day. It was very trying, but Bess said:

'We did have a good time going nutting and doing lots of things we never did before in October.'

As they trudged home through the snow and sleet, which they did not mind one bit, Lynn, shifting his book-bag from one arm to the other, and drawing a little nearer to Bess, as became the burst of confidence, said:

'Say, Bess, I have made up my mind what I shall be when I am a grown-up man.' As Lynn was only eight years old, it was taking things in season when he made such an important decision.

'Well, dear, what is it to-day?' asked Bess with a slight emphasis upon the last word.

'I am going to be a doctor!' Lynn was very solemn, and Bess, from the height of her thirteen years, looked down sympathizingly upon the sweet chubby face and the stout little figure well wrapped in overcoat, warm gloves, and overshoes, with the curls which his mother could not bring herself to sacrifice, hanging over his shoulders in a tangled mass.

'I'll tell you why!' he added, in a very low tone. 'I want to cure papa; you know he has such dreadful sick spells, and I think a real good doctor ought to know how to cure him. So I shall study real hard and read a lot of big books like those in Dr. White's library, then I'll study papa's case; that is what Dr. White said when mamma was sick. I heard him tell

'I AM GOING TO BE A DOCTOR.'

papa he was studying the case; and you know he made her well afterwards! I guess I'll ask him to study papa's case.'

'Oh, Lynn, don't do that!' exclaimed Bess, in alarm.

'Why not?' asked Lynn in wonder.

Poor Bess hesitated; too well she understood her father's case. Lynn waited for a reply, and she finally said:—'Maybe the doctor would think you were meddling. I wouldn't do it, dear.'

'It is such a long time to wait until I get growed up,' sighed Lynn. 'Maybe he will die 'fore that! Don't you know how bad he is sometimes? They never let me see him, but one night I was awake when he came home and I jumped out of bed and peeped through a crack in the door, and saw Patrick carrying him upstairs, he looked awfully, and didn't get up the next morning until after I went to school. When I went out to feed the rabbits after breakfast I asked Patrick what ailed papa, and he said: "Oh, a spree!" and when I asked him what that meant, he said, "Oh, you'll find out soon enough!" I knew it must be something dreadful. Then that night I was so sick, and mamma heard me crying and came to ask what was the matter, and I said: "Oh, I've got a spree!" She laughed, and said I was dreaming; then she looked so sorrowful. Oh, Bess, I am sure I am going to be a doctor so I can learn how to cure a spree!'

'Spree isn't a nice word, and I wouldn't talk about it any more,' said Bess.

'It isn't a nice thing to have, either, but I should think I'd have

to talk about it and think about it if I am going to learn how to cure papa,' persisted the boy.

Bess had been all life and animation when they started for home. She was full of glee at the prospect of battling with the storm, but now the life and joy had gone out of her face. Though only thirteen, she had come to a knowledge of the trouble that shadowed their home. The knowledge of the real trouble had thus far been kept from Lynn. For several months all could see that something was wrong with the father. More than once he had been so under the influence of strong drink as to require Patrick's services in getting to his room and to bed after he had been brought to his door by companions only a little less helpless than himself. This was the sorrow that hung over their beautiful home, and made Mrs. Blanchard's smile sad while her cheeks were growing pale and her step heavy.

That evening, after Lynn was in bed, Mrs. Blanchard and Bess sat together in the mother's room, which opened off the library. There was an open fire, and Bess had said: 'Mamma, let us, you and I, sit here and watch the old year out and make good resolutions. That is the way the girls of our class are going to do; four or five are going to stay at May's.'

'And you want me to play that I am a girl with you, dearie? We will sit up until you grow too sleepy to keep awake longer,' was the mother's indulgent reply. There seemed to be a tacit understanding between them that the husband and father need not be expected home in time to break up this arrangement. Sitting in the firelight talking over things that interested Bess, she remembered Lynn's chatter on the way from school, and repeated their conversation to the mother, who, while she smiled at the boy's notion, said, with tears in her voice: 'I am afraid that Dr. Blanchard will never find a more difficult case to study than this, his first one. Poor papa! I dread to have the hour come when Lynn must know; how his idol will crumble before the knowledge of what these sick spells are!' Then, unable longer to control herself, Mrs. Blanchard wept bitterly, while Bess tried to comfort her.

'Papa will surely see how unhappy it is making us, and for Lynn's sake he will stop,' said the brave girl.

Out in the library Mr. Blanchard was sitting alone in the dark. He came home early, and as no one seemed to have heard him come in he had thrown himself into an easy-chair and had fallen asleep, but awoke to hear Bess tell the story of Lynn's ambition and the subsequent conversation. He bowed his head upon his hands in agony of soul. Lynn was his idol as he was Lynn's, and the thought suddenly brought to him of the boy's grief and horror when he should come to know the truth, was a terrible one. He had laughed softly at the first part of the story Bess was telling, but the laugh died out of his heart and a great terror rose up in its place. Presently he heard Bess talking about resolutions for the New Year; a new thought, a hope, sprang up within him. He lifted his head, and, moving softly, he stole out of the house.

The Rev. John Stanley was in his study—not so much to watch the old year out as to welcome the New Year in. The doorbell rang, and in response to his invitation a stranger came in.

'You may possibly know my name,' said the visitor, 'though I do not attend your church. I am John Blanchard. I want a temperance pledge, and I want your help and your prayers. I knew nowhere else to go, so came to you for help. An awful horror came upon me to-night, and I want to close up the yawning, black chasm. It will be a desperate struggle, but I must conquer.'

Mr. Stanley, knowing the man as one of a fast set, wondered what had brought him to this sudden decision.

'It was the boy—our Lynn; I'd rather die than meet his wondering look— his terror, his disgust. I never could endure it; and my Bess, I never dreamed that she knew, brave girl! and my patient wife; God helping me, I'll stop here and now!'

Mother and daughter were still sitting before the smouldering fire. The girl had dropped asleep, her head pillowed on the mother's lap. The hall clock was striking twelve as the door opened, and with a quick, firm step Mr. Blanchard walked in. There was no flush of intoxication upon his face; rather he was pale, and there was a light in his eyes such as even his wife had never seen before. Kneeling beside the pair, and clasping both in his strong arms, he said: 'Dear wife, dear daughter, it is a happy New Year! By the gift of God, I am redeemed, cleansed; we will leave the old year behind and begin a new life.' When they were grown calm, after the first surprise, he told his story, and added, as he finished:

'So you see, after all, I may be considered as "Dr. Lynn's first case!"'

The Coming Man.

A pair of very chubby legs
Encased in scarlet hose;
A pair of little stubby boots,
With rather doubtful toes;
A little kilt, a little coat,
Cut as a mother can—
And lo! before us stands in state
The future's 'coming man.'

His eyes, perchance, will read the stars,
And search their unknown ways;
Perchance the human heart and soul
Will open to their gaze;
Perchance their keen and flashing glance
Will be a nation's light—
Those eyes that now are wistful bent
On some 'big fellow's kite.'

Those hands—those little busy hands—
So sticky, small and brown,
Those hands whose only mission seems
To pull all order down—
Who knows what latent strength may be
Hidden in their clasp,
Though now 'tis but a taffy stick
In sturdy hold they grasp.

Ah, blessings on those little hands
Whose work is yet undone!
And blessings on these little feet,
Whose race is yet unrun!
And blessings on the little brain
That has not learned to plan!
What e'er the future holds in store,
God bless the 'coming man!'

—'The Beacon.'

The Rule of Love.

Little children, oft forgetful,
Are unloving and unkind;
What can sweeten hearts so selfish
With a love that is divine?

Answer:—'If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.'

Sunday School

LESSON I.—JANUARY 6, 1901.

Jesus Anointed at Bethany.

Matt. xxvi., 6-16. Memory verses, 11-13.
Read Mark xiv., 1-10, and John xii., 1-9.

Golden Text.

'She hath done what she could.'—Mark xiv., 8.

The Bible Lesson.

(Learn verses 11-13.)

6. Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,

7. There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat.

8. But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?

9. For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.

10. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.

11. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.

12. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.

13. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

14. Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went out unto the chief priests,

15. And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

16. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

Suggestions.

Our Lord and his disciples had left Jericho after the healing of the blind men and the conversion of Zaccheus, and had gone down to Jerusalem, a few days before the Passover, that they might spend the feast time there.

A few miles east of Jerusalem lay the picturesque little town of Bethany ('House of Dates,' by literal translation). Here Martha and Mary and Lazarus lived, that Lazarus who had been on the other side of the grave, but had returned to take up his earthly life again at the call of his Master. Here, at the house of Simon the leper (supposed to be either the father or the husband of Martha), Jesus and his disciples were enjoying the evening meal, when a woman entered the room bearing in her hand a beautiful box of very precious ointment or perfume. Matthew and Mark do not tell who this woman was, but John, writing many years later, explains that it was Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who made this rare and costly offering of love. This incident is not the same as that mentioned by Luke (vii., 37) which occurred at Capernaum.

Mary poured out this precious perfume on the head and even on the feet of our Lord as an act of reverent devotion and passionate gratitude for the joy he had given them in the restoration of their brother's life. It was no unusual act, this anointing of an honored teacher, it was a custom of these times and is still in some parts of the East, to show reverence and honor in this way. What might seem very peculiar to us was in that land a very natural and proper way of expressing respect. The disciples therefore were not surprised at the form in which Mary's reverent love was shown, but led by the hostile murmurings of the jealous Judas, they began to question the propriety of the costliness of the offering. Three hundred pence was the estimated value of this gift, or about fifty dollars, which in the value of to-day would be about five hundred dollars. This might have been given to feed many poor persons or to sustain one family for a whole year. The disciples spoke of the offering as a waste! But Jesus, who cared more for the poor than these men could ever comprehend, Jesus, who was about to give his own life for the salvation of every human being, Jesus, who had laid aside the glories of his heavenly home and had become poor in order that 'we through his poverty might be made rich,' Jesus accepted with pleasure the timid woman's offering and rebuked the niggardly criticising spirit of those who had grumbled at this use of the precious oil.

Our Lord had more than once supplied the temporal needs of the multiutdes. Thousands had received from his hands bread enough and to spare, he had by his divine power so multiplied a few small loaves as to make far more than 'three hundred pence' worth of bread, and had given it to the poor. Surely he might with perfect justice receive this costly offering in return for an inestimable boon, without the paltry temporal needs of the people being constantly thrust before him by the small-minded by-standers. He was about to give his own life to secure the eternal welfare of this people. Mary, unconsciously, was anointing his body for the burial which was so soon to sadden all their hearts. If she had poured this perfume on the head of her own dead brother no one would have thought of objecting, but now with the very shadow of death creeping over them they stand there criticising and implying not only that Mary has no care for suffering humanity, but even that the Saviour of the world is content to see that suffering go unrelieved.

Blind critics! But let us not spend time in criticising them again, but turn rather to loving contemplation of the beautiful gift of the grateful giver. For 'wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also be this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.' The lesson of this fragrant incident is not that we should neglect to care for the needy and sorrowing, nothing in the life of Christ could ever make us think that, but the lesson is that we should be in such close fellowship with our Lord that we might be able to know and do the things which will give him the greatest pleasure.

From this exquisite offering it is hard to turn our eyes to the next scene in our lesson. The treachery of Judas Iscariat can only be spoken of with the greatest pain and humility—pain that a man who had had the privileges of being for three years in the presence of Jesus, hearing his words, seeing his deeds of mercy and love, could ever be capable of such base and awful ingratitude—humility lest we also having enjoyed high privileges, should fall into the same temptation, and, being human, should yield to the same strain. The fall of Judas was not sudden and inexplicable, there had long been a growing disaffection in his heart, he had allowed the morbid spirit of disloyalty to grow until it was big enough to open the door to its master, for we read that 'the devil put it into the heart of Judas to betray Jesus,' and again that 'Satan entered into him' to complete the work. The only way to keep the enemy out of our hearts is to make sure that God is reigning within.

Questions.

What three friends had Jesus in Bethany? At whose house was he staying? What occurred as they were sitting at supper? Who brought the gift? For how much could it have been sold? What did the bystanders say about it? What did our Lord say? Is Jesus pleased if we neglect the needy or suffering ones? Are the needs of the body more important than the needs of the soul? How did Judas Iscariot treat the Saviour of the world? What would you have done under the same temptation? Is there any amount of silver or self-satisfaction that you would rather have than have the love of Christ and his assurance of salvation in your heart?

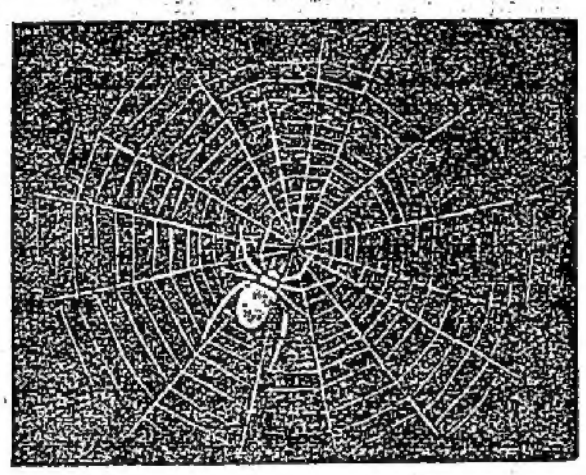
Don't forget the time when you were a soldier in the battle of child-life. Try to have your pupils feel that your own childish trials and discomforts are still fresh in memory.

Temperance

Blackboard Temperance Lesson.

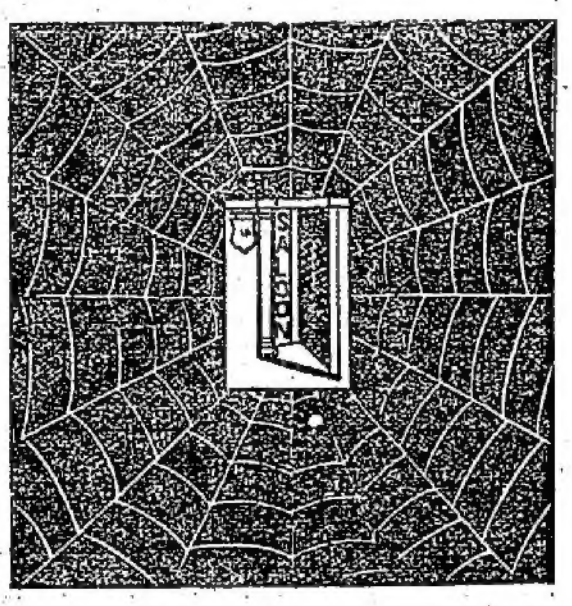
(By Mrs. W. F. Crafts, in 'Youth's Temperance Banner.')

I do not need to tell you that this is a kind of trap. You say it is a spider's web. True. But what does the spider make his



web for? For catching flies and other kinds of insects. It is the most delicate and yet the strongest trap that is made. You say you can easily brush it away with your little finger. Of course you can, because it was not made for such a giant as you are. Just see how impossible it is for the flies and gnats to get out of it when once they get in, and you will understand something about its strength.

I am going to draw an open door in the middle of it, and then it will do for a picture of a kind of trap that is set for people, mostly men and boys. Such traps are often to be found on street corners, but they are in other places as well. I think you hardly need to be told that it is the saloon I am talking about. It is the strongest trap in all the world for boys and men. When they once get inside they are apt to stay there for life. You say you have seen lots of men coming out of



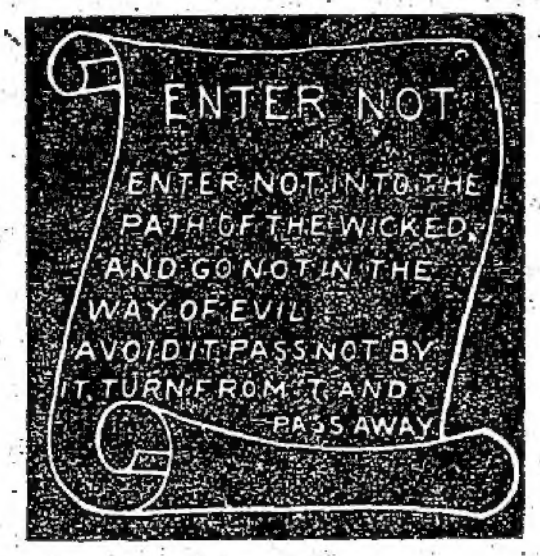
saloons. Yes, you have, but if you only waited a little while you would see them all going in again.

I know you have heard the song of 'The Spider and the Fly.' The spider says to the fly:

'You have only to pop your head
Just inside of the door
To see so many curious things
You never saw before.'

And then he goes on to tell the little fly how he can lie down to rest on soft cushions, etc. The saloon keepers seem to have learned their ways from the spider. They make their saloons just as beautiful as they can, and they promise such good times, comfort, etc., to those who will pop their heads just inside of their doors.

They do even more than this. They often sprinkle the sidewalks just outside of their doors with whiskey as a way of getting



people to come in. I think you must agree with me that saloons are the worst traps in all the world.

Saved a Farm.

You cannot afford to smoke; you cannot afford to chew. You either take very good tobacco, or you will take very cheap tobacco. If it is cheap I will tell you why it is cheap. It is made of burdock and lampblack and sawdust and colt's foot and plantain leaves and fuller's earth and salt and alum and lime and a little tobacco, and you cannot afford to put such a mess as that in your mouth. But if you use expensive tobacco, do you not think it would be better for you to take the amount of money which you are now expending for this herb, and which you will expend during the course of your life, if you keep the habit up, and with it buy a splendid farm, and make the afternoon and the evening of your life comfortable?

There are young men whose life is going out inch by inch from cigarettes. Now, do you not think it would be well to listen to the testimony of a merchant of New York, who said this:—'In early life I smoked six cigars a day at six and a half cents each. They averaged that. I thought to myself one day, "I'll just put aside all I would consume in cigars and all I would consume if I keep on in the habit, and I'll see what it will come to by compound interest." And he gives this tremendous statistic: 'Last July completed thirty-nine years since, by the grace of God, I was emancipated from the filthy habit, and the saving amounted to the enormous sum of $29,102.03 by compound interest. We lived in the city, but the children, who had learned something of the enjoyment of country life from their annual visits to their grandparents, longed for a home among the green fields. I found a very pleasant place in the country for sale. The cigar money came into requisition, and I found it amounted to a sufficient sum to purchase the place, and it is mine.' Now, boys, you take your choice. Smoking without a home, or a home without smoking. This is common sense as well as religion. —'Christian Herald.'

The annual consumption of tobacco in the United States amounts to more than ninety-five million pounds of manufactured tobacco and one billion three hundred million cigars.

The Find-the-Place Almanac for 1901.

TEXTS IN GALATIANS.

Jan. 1, Tues.—Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jan. 2, Wed.—If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

Jan. 3, Thur.—They glorified God in me.

Jan. 4, Fri.—A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ.

Jan. 5, Sat.—Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us.

Correspondence

A Happy New Year.

Dear Boys and Girls,—This is to wish you a very happy and bright New Year. The new century is before you. You are to be the men and women of the first half of the Twentieth Century, what kind of a century will you make it? What kind of reforms will you introduce, what kind of men will you vote for, to what interests will you devote the best years of your life? These are questions well worth considering in these opening days of your new century. What are your ambitions? Some of you will be the law-makers of our country, make up your minds from the first to make and support only righteous and just laws, laws for the protection of the weak and for the punishment of wrongdoers of every class. Laws for the prohibition of the liquor traffic, for which we have worked so long will surely be made and firmly established by the readers of the 'Messenger' when they become the men and women who must influence the country.

What shall your influence be on the Twentieth Century? It is time to decide at once, for as long as you are alive you will be constantly exercising some sort of an influence. Only by the help of God and the indwelling presence of our living, loving Saviour, can your life be made a real blessing and success. Success may not come to you in the way that you have dreamed of and longed for, but he who honestly strives to live a life of obedience to God and loyalty to Christ, can never be a failure.

Again wishing you all the joys of the New Year and praying that each one of you may be made a blessing to the Twentieth Century,

Your loving friend.
THE CORRESPONDENCE EDITOR.

Lacolle, Que.

Dear Editor,—I have three cats, a dog and a horse. One cat's name is Samantha, the others are called Dinah and Kitchener. Sam. is a big yellow cat. Dinah is small, with gray and yellow. Kitchener is black and gray. Kitchener was born in the war time, so we called him Kitchener. Punch is a big fat pug dog; he is twelve years old. Dinah, the horse, is black and gray. She has been with my father fourteen years.

ADA D. M.

Cape North.

Dear Editor,—I have one sister and six brothers. We have a saw-mill. My grandpapa and grandmamma are out west. I miss them very much. J. A. (Aged 12.)

Cape North.

Dear Editor,—I take the 'Messenger' and like it very much. I live on a farm. I have one brother and three sisters, one of them is away in Boston. M. M.

Millville.

Dear Editor,—I have a sister fourteen, and a brother eight months, his name is Paul, and he is a dear little fellow.

LAURA.

New Glasgow, N.S.

Dear Editor,—We have a library in our Sunday-school and I get a new book every Sunday. I have a black kitten, she weighs five pounds and a half, her name is Flossy. I go to the country every summer for the holidays and I have a lovely time. It is so quiet and nice out in the country.

FANNY C. (Aged 10.)

Church Point, N.B.

Dear Editor,—Mamma has taken the 'Messenger' for about ten years, and we all like it very much. We have a Mission Band, and we all look forward to the day that we meet. I have two brothers and four sisters. Most of the people fish for smelts down here in the winter. I love to skate. FLORENCE I. A. (Aged 12.)

Milton.

Dear Editor,—I have two brothers and five sisters. I am the eldest. My father is a blacksmith and plays the violin.

MAUD G. (Aged 14.)

Rednerville, Ont.

Dear Editor,—My sister has taken the 'Northern Messenger' about three years, and I read it from end to end. I think it is very nice. I have a Persian kitten about six months old and a pair of rabbits, and also two water spaniels, and three sisters and one brother.

JOHN G. C. (Aged 8.)

Annan.

Dear Editor,—My brother has taken the 'Messenger' for about four years. We have some nice flowers in the house.

ALEX H.

North Bedeque.

Dear Editor,—I live a quarter of a mile from school, and half a mile from church. I have one sister, and a little brother three years old, he has a cat who will stand on his hind legs for a piece of meat. My papa is a farmer and keeps the post-office. We have fifty turkeys and forty hens. I like to feed the turkeys, they go gobble, gobble. My sister has eight ducks.

JESSIE M. C. (Aged 8.)

Picton.

Dear Editor,—The 'Messenger' was sent to me last Christmas as a present. I like it very much. MARION A. (Aged 8.)

Ulverton.

Dear Editor,—I am a little girl six years old. I went to school only last summer, and got a prize. I go to Sunday-school and get the 'Messenger' every Sunday. We think it is the best paper in the world.

AMY.

Acton, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I go to both the Presbyterian Church and Baptist Church. I am eleven years old, my birthday being Nov. 24. ALEX.

Flat Lands, N.B.

Dear Editor,—My little brother takes the 'Messenger' and likes it very well. There are so many interesting stories in it. We have a nice Sunday-school here, and quite an attendance; also a library.

ISABEL G.

Mitchell Square.

Dear Editor,—When there is snow on the ground I hitch up my dog to my sleigh. I have a harness made for Nip, as I call my dog. In the summer I have a waggon to hitch him up in. My father keeps a store and post-office. I have only two pets, my dog Nip and a cat. ROY. (Aged 9.)

Mount Vernon, Ill.

Dear Editor,—As I have never seen a letter from Mount Vernon, I thought I would write one. I live on a farm one-half mile from school. I have three sisters and one brother. I go to Pleasant Grove School. I like to go to Sunday-school. The last day of October was grandma's golden wedding. All their children and most of their grandchildren were there, and we had a nice time.

RUBY M. (Aged 10.)

Minesing.

Dear Editor,—I have a little kitty. I call her Minnie. We went to school this summer, but it is too cold now.

ISABEL, (Aged 6.)

MINESING.

Dear Editor,—I have a nice canary that mamma got for me. I have one sister and no brothers. My sister's name is Isabel. She is six years old and I am eight years old. We like the 'Messenger' very much.

AGNES C.

Toronto.

Dear Editor,—I go to dayschool; it is about five minutes' walk. I have a dog who will do anything for a piece of bread. My brother has a cat. My brother's name is Harry. I saw one of the soldiers.

BLOYE B. (Aged 8.)

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Answer.—It is the religion founded by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who has brought to us the full knowledge of God and of eternal life.

2. Q.—How must we think of God?

A.—God is the one Eternal Spirit, Creator and Sustainer of all things; he is Love, boundless in wisdom and power, perfect in holiness and justice, in mercy and truth.

3. Q.—By what name has Jesus taught us to call God?

A.—Our Father in Heaven.

4. Q.—What do we learn from this name of Father?

A.—We learn that God made us in his own image, that he cares for us by his wise providence, and that he loves us far better than any earthly parent can.

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